

Testimony in support of SB443, to the Environment Committee, by Elizabeth Beisel

Thank you, Senator Meyer, Representative Gentile, and members of the Environment Committee, for the opportunity to support a bill that will truly make a difference in the lives of so many children.

As the mother of three children, and a health care provider, I support this bill which serves to protect our children, and for that matter anyone who utilizes school grounds, parks, and other public areas, from toxic chemicals. I also support the amendment by Senator Williams, which will ban genetically modified perennials from being grown in the state of CT. This ban is critical to protect our future, the environment, and our health.

A few weeks ago, I had no idea that the grass many parents sit on when they watch their children play various sports was potentially covered in chemicals. I shudder to think about all the times in the last 20 years I have taken our children to the park and let them play and picnic in the grass. I never even thought about it. I didn't think about resting my hands on it and then eating something or the fact that our skin absorbs everything we touch. I didn't question if it was safe for my children to roll down a grassy hill or sit on a public lawn and watch fireworks.

Once I learned about the current law, which covers schools from daycare through grade 8, I decided to look into what is sprayed on our town's high school grounds. These grounds are where my children and my friend's children have been playing sports since they were in kindergarten. These grounds are where we walk and let our dog run free. Last year, three toxic chemicals were applied to several of the high school sports fields: all known to be harmful to health and/or the environment. One chemical was also sprayed under the bleachers – where young children love to play while their parents watch the older sibling's sporting events. That same toxin was also sprayed along the wood line, where our dog always gravitates to.

We have been involuntarily exposed to toxic chemicals; and it may take 20-30 years to determine the effects of these chemicals on our bodies.

Below is a link to an article that discusses safety testing. It describes how safety testing is flawed, because it only tests the one ingredient. i.e glyphosate, but when that ingredient is mixed with adjuvants, which are classified as "inert" the mixture can be up to 1000 times stronger. (And to my knowledge, that mixture is not tested for safety.)

<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/weed-whacking-herbicide-p/>

By protecting the public's health and moving this bill forward, you will protect children, parents, and animals from involuntary exposure to the detrimental effects of toxic chemicals. Most of the opponents of this bill do NOT have our children's best interests at heart; they are here to serve industry and the economy. In my opinion, no amount of economic gain or corporate profit is worth it, if a loved one is diagnosed with a life threatening disease, developed as a result of exposure to toxic chemicals. Thank you for taking the time to review this important issue.